DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND RURAL LIVELIHOOD: A CASE STUDY OF TWO VILLAGE TRACTS, SHWEBO TOWNSHIP, SAGAING REGION

PhD DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Livelihood is the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. The development program in turn shapes the livelihood assets directly or through shaping the vulnerability. The development processes are influenced by laws, policies, institutions and culture of a society. The specific objectives of this study are to describe the livelihood of rural cultivators, to analyze contextual factors associated with livelihood of rural cultivators, to analyze the effect of development program for poverty alleviation on rural people and to identify possible remedies for addressing livelihood vulnerability in Obo, Kinbya, Chiba (North) and Chiba (South) villages in Shwebo Township. A community based cross-sectional, case study was done using multiple method approach: qualitative study, Informal Group Interview (IGI), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII), In Depth Interview (IDI) and quantitative survey. Fifteen informants were interviewed for KII and twenty informants for IDI. Altogether 96 lower class households involved in the quantitative survey. In this study, all social classes have both on-farm and off-farm livelihood activities. Members of the upper and middle classes in study area have financial resources which are formal and informal services but there are only informal services in members of the lower class. All social classes need monetary loans in one form or another to have their livelihoods running smooth. Gender role in regard of livelihood goes different according to each social class. In the upper and middle classes most of a community’s vulnerability is due to crop shock, insufficient capital, seasonality of price, insufficient inputs and weak knowledge of livelihood. Individual-wise, most vulnerability is caused by human health shock. In the lower class, community vulnerability is complete lack of support from organizations; and individual-wise vulnerability comprises insufficient capital, lack of opportunities, human health shock, food security and education. Development program does not secure poverty alleviation because no supports are offered to lower class members. Livelihood opportunities based on natural, physical, human, financial and social capitals of all social classes should be created.

Key words: livelihood, assets, development program, vulnerability context, coping strategies